

IN THE CLAIMS

*The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:*

1. *(Currently Amended)* A hand pattern switch device comprising:

image pickup means for picking up an image of a hand that is within a predetermined image pickup zone and recognizing a hand pattern therefrom and for detecting a hand motion from the picked-up image to obtain operation information for controlled objects;

controlled object selecting means for selecting one of the controlled objects in accordance with at least one of the recognized hand pattern or a hand motion; and

detection mode selecting means for selecting one of a plurality of prescribed detecting modes as a mode of detecting the operation information based on the hand motion in dependence with the controlled object selected by the controlled object selecting means; and

instructed-operation recognizing section for controlling the controlled object selected by the controlled object selecting means based on the operation information detected with the detecting mode selected by the detection mode selecting means,

wherein said plurality of prescribed detecting modes include:

a moved distance detecting mode for detecting a moved distance of the hand in the image pickup zone, and

a stop time detecting mode for detecting a period of stop time of the hand held at a stop position, ~~to which~~ after the hand has been moved by a predetermined distance or more in the image pickup zone.

2. *(Previously Presented)* The hand pattern switch device according to claim 1, wherein said controlled object selecting means cyclically selects one of the controlled objects each time a predetermined hand motion pattern is detected.

3. *(Canceled)*

4. *(Previously Presented)* The hand pattern switch device according to claim 1, wherein the moved distance detecting mode is a mode in which the moved distance of the hand is detected in multi-stage fashion using a predetermined moved distance as a unit of detection.

5. *(Previously Presented)* The hand pattern switch device according to claim 1, wherein the image pickup zone is located laterally to a steering wheel of a vehicle to enable an arm of a driver steering the steering wheel to extend without changing a driving posture of the driver.

6. *(Previously Presented)* The hand pattern switch device according to claim 5, wherein the image pickup zone is at least 50 mm apart from an outer periphery of the steering wheel, the image pickup zone being a rectangle in shape and having a size of about 600 mm in a fingertip direction and about 350 mm in a width direction of the driver's hand which is extended.

7. *(Previously Presented)* The hand pattern switch device according to claim 5, wherein the detection of the hand motion in the image pickup zone includes detecting a 10 mm to 70 mm displacement of a centroid position of the hand, determined from the picked-up image, as at least one of a controlled object selection or an amount of operation of the controlled object.

8. *(Previously Presented)* A hand pattern switch device according to claim 1, wherein the image pickup means is disposed at a location for picking up an image of a zone to which an arm of a driver steering a steering wheel of a vehicle extends without changing a driving posture of the driver.

9. *(Previously Presented)* The hand pattern switch device according to claim 8, wherein said image pickup means is disposed at a ceiling of the vehicle.

10. *(Previously Presented)* A hand pattern switch device according to claim 1, wherein:

said controlled object selecting means cyclically selects one of the controlled objects when a predetermined hand motion pattern is repeated, and

said instructed-operation recognizing section includes operation amount changing means for changing an amount of operation of the selected controlled object in accordance with the predetermined hand motion pattern.

11. *(Previously Presented)* The hand pattern switch device according to claim 10, further including:

operation start recognizing means for recognizing that an operation of said hand pattern switch device is started when the recognized hand pattern corresponds to a predetermined first hand pattern,

wherein said controlled object selecting means selects a controlled object among the controlled objects in accordance with a motion of the hand when a recognized hand pattern corresponds to a predetermined second hand pattern, after said operation start recognizing means recognizes that the operation of said hand pattern switch device is started.

12. (*Previously Presented*) The hand pattern switch device according to claim 11, wherein said operation start recognizing means includes confirming means for confirming that the hand of the predetermined first hand pattern does not grasp or touch a particular object and said operation start recognizing means determines that the operation of said hand pattern switch device is started after confirming that the hand of the predetermined first hand pattern does not grasp or touch the particular object.

13. (*Previously Presented*) The hand pattern switch device according to claim 11, wherein the predetermined first hand pattern corresponds to one that is formed when the hand grasps an object, and the predetermined second hand pattern corresponds to one that is formed when the hand points an object with its finger.

14. (*Previously Presented*) The hand pattern switch device according to claim 11, further including promoting means for promoting start of the operation amount changing means when the recognized hand pattern corresponds to a predetermined third hand pattern and a detected position of the hand in the image pickup zone is not displaced for a predetermined time after the controlled object is selected.